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- *Expanding the concept of Spirit as connecting filaments*
- *Religion is not crucial for everyone but connectedness is*

You are joined together with one another and with all others within the dominant and loving presence, the embracing reality of All That Is, that which you refer to as God.

We speak to you so often about the nature of God. We speak to you often about the nature of human life, and we have spoken some of the nature of nonhuman life-forms that have a direct bearing on your own lives. We would like to focus your thoughts more specifically on the nature of Spirit. When we refer to Spirit, it is not limited to spirit in a conventional, religious context, but a Spirit that goes beyond considerations of established theological beliefs and societal understandings.

Spirit to us is essentially what we refer to as filaments. Spirit is a filament of connection. It is an energy. It is a reality that is immediately felt and immediately recognized on many levels. You sometimes speak of friendships, a relationship that you experience with others that is not specifically connected to religious doctrine, but it is a relationship that is built on and encourages trust, compassion, and ultimately at a significant level, love.

Spirit is about connection. You connect to your guides; the guides connect to you. That is a function of Spirit with no relationship to specific religious beliefs. You may feel connected to God but not to a religious community. That connection is Spirit. You may feel connected to another individual, the context of that connection having no basis in traditional spiritual values, but such connection as you experience and feel is nevertheless the consequence of Spirit.

You connect to nature, and while you may in part describe the beauty of nature as God's creation, there are many who respond to the beauty of nature solely on the basis of that beauty. It is not built around adherence to a perception of God. One appreciates nature because nature can be beautiful. One appreciates nature because it is. You feel connected to that manifestation of nature, whether it is animal or whether it is inanimate in some form. The connection is there.

You connect to thoughts. You connect to ideas, to concepts. Those concepts may be scientific, or they may be more socially derived, but that connection is also a function of Spirit, for the filament that we speak of is what draws you to something regardless of the label you place upon it.

Religious beliefs contribute much to an understanding of the beauty and purpose of life around you, but it is not necessary to have a religious experience as you appreciate and take in the life that you live. You are connected to thoughts—just your own thoughts, not necessarily the scientific or social theories of others, but your own thoughts, your own emotions—even as you discussed your awareness of yourselves,

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your ability to see yourselves as responding, and the acknowledgement that that response is not who you are. It only happens to be what you do at the moment.

Those thoughts, those views of yourself, those views of others, and simply observations are filaments, strands, that belong to the Spirit. When you wish for another a kindness of Spirit, you are not wishing them such kindness within a given tradition. You are wishing them a peace that is the consequence of awareness, of observation, of appreciation.

There are so many levels to what Spirit is and to what Spirit means that the term itself is often interpreted in very limited ways. Our effort here is to expand all that you bring to the concept of Spirit.

We say you are joined spiritually. That means more than you are joined because you are somehow living within the shelter that is God's shelter. When you are joined in Spirit with others, you are connected at many, many different levels in many different ways. Part of the purpose of life is the expansion of Spirit. You are not given life so that God can grow, but God's presence is increased because of your lives. The growth that takes place in the presence you call God is, in a way, of secondary importance. What is of greatest significance is your sensitivity to the reality of Spirit as we outline it here.

There are many societies that would not accept your standard definition of being spiritual. In your society, spiritual is strongly associated with the religious experience, but in many other societies the sense of being spiritual really means they are connected to All That Is. Being spiritual, therefore, takes on a very different significance. There are societies that exist where spirituality is the fundamental principle upon which they are governed, and yet they may not say specifically there is a God, but they feel that thread, they feel that connection on the web. They feel connected to Life with a capital L.

In the history of human existence, there has always been a quest to understand why there is life and what does it mean and what is the purpose. Asking such questions is most significant. It is essential for all capable of human critical thought to ask those questions, and for some societies the answer has been to think of a Creator that has put this altogether, but such a resolution to those questions is by no means appropriate for all. Therefore, there needs to be a more fundamental understanding of what spirit means and what being spiritual can mean.

We acknowledge the value of religious pursuits, but we also strongly advocate for the reality that your own soul grows, regardless of whether this spirituality that we speak of is in a religious or nonreligious context. It is not important that all people are religious. It is important that all people ultimately feel a connection. No connection is totally inclusive. No human being has existed who does not experience animosity toward another—anger, jealousy. Those are human traits. So human life is never perfect, and the sense of connection, therefore, is never fully embraced. But whatever connection you can feel toward what you observe in the world around you is a stepping

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stone in your own development of your soul, of the spirit that you have, as a lower case s.

You are not asked to be satisfied only with a total love of all and everything, everyone. That's not possible, but you are asked to try to sense that filament, to sense the reality of Spirit, allowing that reality to grow. You are asked to nurture it, nurture your own spirituality, but at the same time nurture the spirituality of others. Nurture their connection. Nurture their understanding of how they share, not how they differ. In so doing, this web with its filaments begins to be experienced as a web and not as a single filament.

If you look at a web up close in great detail that is highly magnified, you will find that each filament itself is a complex structure. The filament is not just a single strand leading from one place to another. It is a highly complex series of components that become a single strand, but the strand is not just a single strand. A web you identify as a web because of the intersections of many strands, and in seeing those intersections, you begin to see a pattern, a logic, if you like, that leads you to conclude that is a web. As you become more aware of how you are connected in the ways we have just enumerated, you begin to sense more clearly there is a web, there is a network of connections, and it is that network in its totality that is the overriding Spirit that we refer to.

So often in your society you choose to identify spirit only in religious terms. Religions need a sense of spirit to survive. That's what gives them an identity, but Spirit with a capital S does not need religion to survive. It includes religious experiences and those connections that are labeled as sacred, but it doesn't require them to be acknowledged by you in order to find growth in the significant ways that you evolve.

The religious experience is an intensely personal experience, and it is entirely valid. It is entirely worth pursuit for many. The sense of connection that comes out of the religious association with others can be extraordinarily empowering, strength-giving, fulfilling, and refreshing, and for many it is through their religious experience that they gain a glimpse of what spirituality truly means.

There is no thread, no filament, which is crucial for everyone to embrace. There're only the connections that you feel personally that bring you closer to What Is. It's that connection that is fundamental to the pursuit of all human beings. Some understand that. Some understand that within one human life. Some understand that through numerous human lives. Some understand that without human life. But ultimately it is that understanding that is the final fulfillment of being one with All That Is. When you seek balance in your lives, when you seek balance in the lives of others, you are actually seeking those filaments, those threads, which give meaning and significance to your own life and to the reality that you experience in human form.

We say you are united in Spirit. You are united because you are all a part of that web, and even if you only see the filament that is in front of you, the fact that you know

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there are other filaments which in their way are connected to yours, and that there is a real Entity of all of those connections gives you then a sense of the magnitude of what Spirit is and the impact of what it can mean to be spiritual in your own perspectives.

Life is about connections. Life is about awareness. Life is not about total, full, one hundred percent awareness, but it is about connections of some kind. For a young child whose life is terminated early, there is still a connection—a connection with a parent, a connection with a sibling. There is that sense that one is not completely alone. One can be nurtured, and after sufficient nurturing, one then is able to offer nurture to another. When you see your connection with one person, you become more sensitized to the connection you have with another and then another and then another, and soon you are fully aware that these connections are vast and encompassing, and your lives seek ways to experience connections.

Seek manifestations of that Spirit and be surrounded by gratitude when you see a new filament, acknowledging it was there all the time, and you are now embracing it, calling it your own, and responding because you are part of what makes that web. You are part of what makes the Spirit. Your awareness of Spirit affirms who you are as spiritual entities. Explore those strands. Look for patterns. See the filament that affirms that you are never alone and that you belong permanently to All That Is.

You are blessed in Spirit.

Amen.